

VZCZCXRO5204
OO RUEHDBU
DE RUEHEK #0332/01 0850945
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 260945Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9218
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2020
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0110
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0120
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0593
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0409
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0117
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0276
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2415
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1800
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000332

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/26/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: GKNB CHAIRMAN SUTALINOV CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE
VIOLENCE DURING APRIL DEMONSTRATIONS

BISHKEK 00000332 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

.

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

11. (C) At the March 21 Novrooz celebration, GKNB Chairman Sutalinov approached Ambassador to register his concerns that the April demonstrations could turn violent and to enlist Ambassador's support to moderate the actions of the opposition. He also expressed hope that the U.S.-Kyrgyz bilateral relationship would improve. He said the Russians were not playing a constructive role in Kyrgyzstan, and have as a goal the closure of Manas Air Base. Sutalinov seemed to be trying to accomplish a number of mutually-contradictory goals simultaneously: ingratiate himself with Ambassador with his "democratic" credentials, so that he has a better idea of what the U.S. is up to here, but also to make a friend in case things go wrong in April and he needs a bolthole; establish himself as a Bakiyev insider and conduit for U.S. messages, but also distance himself from Bakiyev in case things go wrong; enlist Ambassador's assistance in influencing the opposition and civil society; and finally, heap dirt on the opposition, especially Suvanaliyev. Ambassador was somewhat taken aback by Sutalinov's approach; however, we have as many reasons to cultivate this relationship as Sutalinov does. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

CELEBRATING SPRING WITH THE GKNB

12. (C) On March 21, the Bishkek City Government hosted a first-ever official Novrooz celebration to mark the

Zoroastrian New Year and celebrate spring. Held in Ala-Too Square, the guest list was headed up by President Bakiyev and included a cultural program and a speech by the President. The crowd was small, however, and GKNB Chairman Murat Sutalinov told Ambassador that he had kept it small for security reasons.

¶3. (C) Ambassador was seated in the government section and was immediately joined by Sutalinov, who said he had been looking for her. Noting that he was glad that they were not sitting in the diplomatic section where the Russian Ambassador could observe them, Sutalinov proceeded to chat with Ambassador for the next hour and a half. Others, however, clearly took note, and this did not seem to bother a very self-confident Sutalinov in the least.

CONCERNS APRIL DEMONSTRATIONS COULD TURN VIOLENT

¶4. (C) Sutalinov raised concerns that the upcoming demonstrations in April could easily turn violent. Sutalinov told Ambassador that he is trying to convince President Bakiyev that immediate (unspecified) reforms are essential to avert the threat of violence. He said Bakiyev needs to deal with the opposition correctly, but also said that every time Bakiyev and Kulov get together, Kulov outsmarts the President.

¶5. (C) He noted former Prime Minister Kulov was being led to confrontation by those around him, especially Sutalinov's former deputy at the MVD, Omurbek Suvanaliyev. He characterized Suvanaliyev as one of the three main "thiefs-in-law" in Kyrgyzstan, who had inherited the mantle from disgraced former parliamentarian Muratbek Malabayev, known as "the wallet." Suvanaliyev's money from casinos and

BISHKEK 00000332 002.2 OF 003

other ill-gotten gains was what was financing the United Front. (NOTE: This is the first time we have heard this. Suvanaliyev has a reputation for aggressively going after crime and organized crime. END NOTE.)

ROLE FOR USG

¶6. (C) Gesturing to President Bakiyev, a few feet away, Sutalinov said "these people" are not going to give up without a fight; if there is violence, Bakiyev won't run like Akayev and the fighting will take place in Bishkek, not in the south -- implying that the homebase of the opposition would suffer the most. Sutalinov said that he had warned unnamed opposition members about this, but he was afraid they would nevertheless try to take power with violence. He suggested Ambassador reach out to the opposition and urge restraint. He also said that if Ambassador had messages for the Kyrgyz leadership, he could pass them on. Ambassador replied that the message is the same for both sides: all actions should be legal, constitutional, and peaceful -- and the rules of the game should not be changed at whim to suit the interests of one of the parties.

IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS

¶7. (C) Sutalinov remarked that he hoped the Ambassador had noticed that the GKNB's relationship with the CIA had improved and that he was hoping for even greater cooperation in the future and was looking forward to going to the U.S. in the fall. Sutalinov said he wants to reform the GKNB and is working with the French and the Germans in this regard; he is also trying to interest the OSCE in funding a program for the GKNB. (COMMENT: He did not mention any intelligence relationship with the Russians. END COMMENT.)

¶8. (S) Sutalinov said he thought the overall bilateral relationship would also improve and he was ready to help.

Ambassador noted the events of the past summer (i.e., declaring two American diplomats personae non grata and rolling up the Surveillance Detection Team), had created difficulties, and it was important that these sorts of things not be repeated. Sutalinov said that he understood that the Ambassador was speaking as a diplomat, but intelligence officers understood that other countries are operationally active and act according to certain rules. Ambassador responded that the Kyrgyz clearly overstepped the rules last summer; Sutalinov ruefully agreed. He again offered to help and said he would welcome information on the assistance programs the USG is implementing in Kyrgyzstan.

¶9. (C) Several times, Sutalinov said the Ambassador needed to call him, so they could talk further, and that in the future, he wanted to meet with her on "neutral territory." Ambassador proposed a cafe or the Residence, to which Sutalinov said he preferred the Residence, as it was unlikely there were listening devices. Ambassador responded that Sutalinov was in a better position to know. Sutalinov requested that the Ambassador call him directly, pulled out two cell phones, and gave her the number to the phone "the FSB does not listen to."

RUSSIA: PLAYING WITH THE KYRGYZ

¶10. (C) When Ambassador asked whether the Russians could be helpful, as they clearly had played a stabilizing role in November, Sutalinov responded that Russia is "playing" with

BISHKEK 00000332 003.2 OF 003

Kyrgyzstan. Nodding again to President Bakiyev, he said there was "trouble" when Kulov met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov, and Sutalinov denied that Bakiyev had initiated the meeting. (NOTE: Both former FM Imanaliyev and United Front leader Suvanaliev have told Ambassador that Bakiyev arranged the meeting. END NOTE.) Sutalinov claimed that if the Russians wanted to be helpful, they would have returned former President Akayev, as well as the billion dollars he stole. Instead, the Russians play both sides and destabilize the situation. While there are some business interests here, Sutalinov maintained that Russia's interests are mainly political. He noted that one of Russia's biggest goals is to reduce American influence, and in particular, ensure that the Manas Air Force Base is closed down as soon as possible. He said that U.S. should be more active on the energy side and welcomed details on the USAID REMAP program.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

¶11. (C) Sutalinov repeated to the Ambassador that he had changed in 1996 when he had traveled to Germany. His later trip to the States had confirmed his inner transformation and made him realize that Kyrgyzstan had to move towards democracy and a market economy. Sutalinov said that in everything he does he tries to show people that there is a different way to do things, that they can be independent. He pointed to his tan trenchcoat as an example and to his haircut, which only he and FM Karabayev sport, as another. Sutalinov said he wore a U.S. Air Force baseball cap during the November demonstrations as a symbol of his independence.

¶12. (C) He watches cable tv, and loves American movies and American actors. Sutalinov said he recently had been watching the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movies as a way to unwind. Sutalinov complained that all he does now is work: he doesn't go to weddings, only funerals (NOTE: Funerals are extremely important in Kyrgyz culture. END NOTE), and his wife is not happy with his long work hours. Sutalinov said that he hopes that by the fall Kyrgyzstan will be sufficiently stable and he can move on. He said that he wants to retire from government service and work with former FM Marat Imanaliyev at the Institute of Public Policy think tank.

